

Vermont 21st Century Community Learning Centers (VT21C)
Peer Review Process
2013-2014

To: Vermont 21st CCLC Grantees
Re: Peer Review Process
Date: August 26th, 2013

The following pages outline the VT21C peer review process, or monitoring process. Participation is required for selected VT21C grantees each year. In 2013-14, projects will be selected for a full project review or for the Site(s) based review process. Projects and sites are selected and prioritized based on an annual assessment of need and the grant investment timeline. Projects or sites that are not chosen for a visit in a given year can always request a visit. All efforts will be made to meet grantee requests as capacity allows.

Full Project Review versus Site Based Review		
Area	Full Project Review	Site Review
Purpose	Project level assessment	Site(s) level focus
Notification	Late August, 2013	Late August, 2013 and ongoing
Timing	Once every three years	Anytime
Process	Set fully in advance	Customizable; more flexible based on need
Visiting team members	3-5 members	1-3 members
Preparation	Time=several hours	Time=one hour
Overview of Process	All documents posted on wiki, agenda created, coordination of schedule with multiple stakeholders, self-assessment completed.	45 minute phone interview with Project Director Basic site documents provided via email (brochure, policies, other) Day-of interview with site coordinator(s),
Visit Day(s) can vary depending on program start time	10.00am- 5.30pm: intensive interviews and site visits to multiple sites with typical team of 4	2.30-5.00pm 30 minute meeting with site coordinator then time for site observations and on the floor conversations/questions with staff, students, and others
Post Visit Report	Full project report	Shorter site focused report

The spirit of both designs above is to work collaboratively with the Vermont Agency of Education, VT21C peers, and others on the local level to address the continuous improvement of 21C funded afterschool programs. Consider joining a team or having staff join a team for a unique professional development experience. Also consider leading a site visit review team with a partner project where both projects will visit each other's sites and provide written and verbal feedback.

Site Based Review: What do I need to do?

1. Review the grid above and the interview questions and program observation grids at the end of this document on page twenty-seven.
2. Work with Emanuel Betz at 802-828-0557 to set up the process before you receive a visit.

Full Project Review: What do I need to do?

1. **Choose a date(s) for a site visit.** Meetings with visiting teams usually run from 10:00am-5:30pm. A sign-up list of projects and dates is posted on the Vermontafterschool wiki at <http://vermontafterschool.pbworks.com/w/page/45324389/2011-12%20Site%20Reviews-Revised%20process> Documentation and reports will all be housed and managed through the wiki. Because of this, hard copies binders are not required to be produced for the visiting team. If you have any questions, please email Emanuel Betz at Emanuel.betz@state.vt.us
2. **Prepare supporting materials.** Complementing, not duplicating effort between this and other state processes such as the Annual Performance Report and grant competitions is a goal. Programs will want to gather and prepare a variety of documents and materials to inform the peer review process. These items fall into three main categories: (i) Posting Pre-Visit Materials; (ii) Completing the Afterschool Quality Assessment Tool; and (iii) Posting other Supporting Documents and Evidence.
 - i. **Posting Pre-Visit Materials-** all projects must include the following five items as part of their review (Items A-E below). These five items must be submitted electronically in a designated wiki folder at

least three weeks before the scheduled visit. These materials will be shared with all members of the visiting team and will serve to familiarize team members with your program.

- A. Program Policies and Procedures- Provide a copy of your program's handbook including essential policies and procedures for afterschool.
- B. Program Brochures- The team needs to know what programs have run and are running for the current year and basic attendance information for each program as available.
- C. Budget Update and Expenditure Report- Provide a budget table listing expenditures by category or use a printout of actual expenditures to-date (since July 1, 2013) During the visit, budget actuals will be reviewed.
- D. Memorandum of Agreement with Community/ School Partners- provide the latest copy of your MOA with community/school partners or, if no updates have occurred, the one from the original grant application can be used (AOE has these).
- E. Governance Board Members- provide a list of all members of your governance/advisory team and any other info about the governance structure (please provide names as well as affiliations).

ii. **Afterschool Quality Assessment Tool** - Using the tool below, rate your project in each of the ten quality areas. The Director, site directors, and third parties (as useful) should complete the self-assessment. When rating, note that the column for "Examples/Action Steps" will likely provide the most useful information for the team and project. Provide either an aggregate copy or individual results before the site visit.

iii. **Other Supporting Documents and Evidence**- As part of the process, projects should provide evidence and documentation to show that the project is adequately meeting expectations. Documents may include lesson planning tools, evaluation reports, newsletters, commendations, awards, etc.

3. **Set meeting agenda.** Create an agenda in collaboration with VTDOE at least three weeks before the visit starting with a 2 hr meeting with the VT21C Director, followed by meetings with individual key partners (e.g., teachers, parents, students, advisory board members, site coordinators, leaders), and a program visit. If you have multiple sites, you will want to target the focus of the visit or it may be possible for the visiting team to separate into multiple groups in order to visit different locations. Have student ambassador(s) at each site to

greet lead the team for a portion of the visit or include 'student voice' in another fashion. If all or a majority of sites cannot be visited in one day, other days will be set up to visit programs.

Typical Agenda

9.45am	Arrival
10:00-12:00pm	Meeting with the Project Director
12.00-12.30pm	Lunch: no meetings (everyone brings lunch)
12:40-2.30	1:1 Individual meeting for 15 minutes (schedule in 5 minute transition times)
2:45-5:00	Visit program (talk with principal students, parents, teachers and others on-site)
End of visit	Visiting team debrief

Notes: When looking at the people to be interviewed, if there are particular areas (weak or otherwise) that you would specific attention paid to, build this into the schedule and communicate your desire to VTDOE. Be sure to allow time for travel and allow space in the agenda so the schedule does not get backed up.

Interview Approach: See page 27 for opening questions that will to guide the interviews:

Program Visit Expectations on page 27 will guide the program visit observation time

4. **Host Visiting Team.** VTDOE will form a visiting team to come to your site(s) on your selected date(s). The visiting team will be made up of VTDOE staff, and may include VT21C staff and directors from other Vermont projects, and other professionals and practitioners working in the afterschool, youth development, or education field.
5. **Receive a report.** Within two weeks of your site visit, you will receive a report outlining the visiting team's comments, recommendations, priority action items, and findings, if any. After receiving this report, read through the report and identify action steps to address suggestions or implement changes as needed. There will be a period of time to accept the report. Shortly afterwards you will receive a follow-up phone call or email as needed from the team leader to go over the visiting team's report, answer any of your questions, and to discuss follow-up if needed on any action steps, corrections, or program modifications.

**Vermont 21st Century Community Learning Centers (VT21C)
Report Template**

In 2013-14, we are implementing the peer review process for selected VT21C projects. Through this process we are looking in particular at the following five areas of performance and operations when we visit a program: (1) Safety; (2) Fiscal Management; (3) Youth Centered Programming; (4) Governance and Leadership; (5) Project Outcomes.

Project Name:

Director: Date of Visit:

Visiting Team:

Date of Draft Report:

Date of Final Report:

Overall comments or observations:

Response to this report: Please submit a written response to VTDOE by (TBA). The response should include detailed steps and time line for addressing each of the findings listed below. Unless otherwise noted, Findings should be resolved within one month of receiving this report. The response should also include detailed steps and time line for addressing each of the “Priority Action Items”. Unless otherwise noted, these

priority items should also be resolved or actively engaging in ongoing work to address the items within 3 months of receiving this report. The items listed in the *Comments* section do not require a response. This column documents ideas for next steps or growth that came up during the visit or that were suggested by the visiting team or others for your consideration. See *definitions* below to guide your thinking on how to interpret each of the columns. Findings, Priority Action Items, and Recommendations are numbered within each column from top to bottom.

Definitions

- **Findings:** Findings are steps that need to be taken immediately to be in-compliance with a law, regulation, or afterschool standard.
- **Priority Action Items:** Action items require follow-up by the grantee, but are less serious than a finding.
- **Recommendations:** Recommendations are team judgments that could be classified as a “strong suggestions.” They do not require action on the part of an LEA.
- **Comments:** Comments are suggestions generated from the team or from individual observations that warrants sharing. No action is required of a comment. They are included as food for thought.

Targeted Monitoring Area	Observations	Evidence Provided	Findings	Priority Action Items and Recommendations	Comments
Safety- Every VT21C program is required to provide for the physical and emotional safety of every child/youth in the program. All programs are expected to have well documented policies and procedures that cover the day-to-day operations of the program as well as any emergency or special needs situations.					

Targeted Monitoring Area	Observations	Evidence Provided	Findings (NA)	Priority Action Items ()and Recommendations ()	Comments
<u>Fiscal Management-</u> Every VT21C program must follow federal guidelines regarding the management of federal grant funds.					

Targeted Monitoring Area	Observations	Evidence Provided	Findings	Priority Action Items and Recommendations	Comments
<p><u>Youth Centered Programming-</u> VT21C projects are expected to establish comprehensive centers and to offer a variety of high-quality programs and engaging learning opportunities. Programs should be intentional, well-designed, taught by highly qualified instructors, and meet the needs of the students in that community. Expectations 54-59 in the self-assessment will guide the end of day program observation period.</p>					

Targeted Monitoring Area	Observations	Evidence Provided	Findings	Priority Action Items and Recommendations	Comments
<p><u>Governance and Leadership-</u> When a community accepts VT21C funding, they take on the responsibility for creating, overseeing, and maintaining a high-quality, engaging program with proven outcomes for children and youth. Every VT21C project is expected to build strong linkages to the school day and to establish a viable governance and leadership structure that includes a variety of partners and stakeholders.</p>					

Targeted Monitoring Area	Observations	Evidence Provided	Findings (NA)	Priority Action Items ()and Recommendations ()	Comments
<p><u>Project Outcomes-</u> VT21C programs are expected to serve children and youth in the eligible communities with special attention to providing opportunities and services for those students most in need. All projects are responsible for following through on their evaluation plan and for designing and running programs that best achieve the stated objectives of the grant.</p>					



AfterSchool Quality Self-Assessment Tool

Use the tables below to rate your afterschool program in each of the ten quality areas: (1) Afterschool Program Leadership (2) Linkages to the School Day; (3) High-Quality Staff; (4) Safe and Appropriate Environment; (5) High-Interest Programming and Youth Engagement; (6) School Leadership Support; (7) Relationships with Children/Youth and their Families; (8) Instructional Leadership; (9) Flexible Structures and Student Choice; and (10) Community Partnerships and Sustainability. For each row in the table, read the expectation for a quality after school program and circle a number representing how your program meets that specific expectation. A score of 1 signifies an area where your program is in need of significant improvement. A score of 3 signifies a mid-level rating. A score of 5 signifies an area where your program fully meets or exceeds the expectation. It would be normal to expect that every program would have some low scores.

I. Afterschool Program Leadership (Director and Site Coordinators were applicable)

Program Expectations	Rating	Examples/Action Steps
1. Director has strong leadership and management skills.	1 2 3 4 5	
2. A governance system guides the program and is used appropriately.	1 2 3 4 5	
3. Director attends Professional Development opportunities or sends other relevant staff.	1 2 3 4 5	
4. Director hosts required site visits and participates on visiting teams to other sites.	1 2 3 4 5	
5. Director communicates regularly with the VTDOE and makes VTDOE aware of any challenges or difficulties before they become too great to correct or improve.	1 2 3 4 5	

6. The program has a useful evaluation plan in place and activities are in line with its goals and objectives.	1 2 3 4 5	
7. Director has a system in place for the collection and analysis of program outcome data and uses that information for on-going program planning, improvement, and evaluation.	1 2 3 4 5	
8. Director is able to explain the purpose and mission of the program and serves as a good representative of the best interests of the children/youth.	1 2 3 4 5	
9. Director has strong experience working in education, youth development, or afterschool.	1 2 3 4 5	
10. Director establishes and maintains well-developed systems and sound fiscal management for the program.	1 2 3 4 5	
11. Director participates in professional development opportunities and is continually increasing his/her knowledge and skills.	1 2 3 4 5	
12. Director has fostered a strong network of colleagues and other afterschool directors to support him/her in their work.	1 2 3 4 5	

II. Linkages to the School Day

Program Expectations	Rating	Examples/Action Steps
13. Programs are connected to the school curricula and to the school's vision and goals.	1 2 3 4 5	
14. The program has the support and participation of the school day classroom teachers.	1 2 3 4 5	
15. Program director, site coordinator, or other staff communicates regularly with the school day administration, teachers, and staff.	1 2 3 4 5	
16. The program has the support and cooperation of school personnel such as: custodians, kitchen staff, technology or media specialist, librarian, nurse, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	
17. The program has the support and input of the curriculum coordinator and/or the reading/ math specialists.	1 2 3 4 5	
18. The program has support in meeting student needs from the ELL teachers, special ed teachers, guidance counselor, behavior specialist, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	
19. Program has access to appropriate space and resources in the school.	1 2 3 4 5	

20. Program policies and procedures are in alignment and complement the school day.	1 2 3 4 5	
21. Director and/or staff have a program office or working space in the school building.	1 2 3 4 5	
22. Director and/or staff attend school faculty meetings or other appropriate team meetings.	1 2 3 4 5	
23. Director and/or site coordinator are visible in the school and considered an integral part of the school staff.	1 2 3 4 5	

III. High-Quality Staff

Program Expectations	Rating	Examples/Action Steps
24. A careful hiring, screening, and interview process is in place for the recruitment and hiring of all staff and instructors.	1 2 3 4 5	
25. Staff are offered professional development opportunities throughout the year.	1 2 3 4 5	
26. Staff are given time and/or adequate compensation so that they are able to attend relevant trainings, workshops, and other professional development opportunities.	1 2 3 4 5	

27. The program uses a variety of teachers, paraeducators, and other school staff to deliver programs.	1 2 3 4 5	
28. The program brings in outside experts and new materials and programs.	1 2 3 4 5	
29. Program staff and instructors serve as good role models and build healthy relationships with the students.	1 2 3 4 5	
30. Program staff and instructors are able to meet and discuss the program regularly or as needed.	1 2 3 4 5	
31. A staff handbook exists and staff and instructors are all familiar with its contents.	1 2 3 4 5	
32. All staff and instructors participate in a staff orientation or other similar training when they are first hired.	1 2 3 4 5	
33. A positive workplace environment is cultivated and recognition for the work they perform.	1 2 3 4 5	
34. A system for staff evaluations and feedback exists and performance reviews are conducted each year.	1 2 3 4 5	
35. A system is in place by which the director collects regular feedback and input from the staff.	1 2 3 4 5	

IV. Safe and Appropriate Environment (VT21C Safety Standards Checklist)

Program Expectations	Rating	Examples/Action Steps
36. Safety policies are clearly articulated in writing, shared with all parties (e.g., parents, staff, school), and followed accordingly.	1 2 3 4 5	
37. Written safety policies include procedures for incidents, emergencies, mandated reporting, bullying, injuries, transportation, weather-related concerns, staff behavior, student behavior, record keeping, confidentiality, and communication with parents/guardians.	1 2 3 4 5	
38. Clear sign in/ sign out procedures are established, staff follow up on any absentees, and every child is accounted for before being released.	1 2 3 4 5	
39. The program uses spaces and student-teacher ratios that are appropriate and safe. (recommendations are 1-2:1 for tutoring; 1:5 for homework help and small group work; 10:1 for most programs)	1 2 3 4 5	
40. Grantee has completed a review of state school age care licensing regulations and has made changes so that each site could pass licensure (if applicable). Safety sections are sections: F,G,H,I,J,K	1 2 3 4 5	
41. CPR/first aid trained staff are always on-site and if a student(s)	1 2 3	

needs an EPI Pen, a plan and training for usage of the EPI Pen is in place.	4 5	
42. Procedures are in place for identifying and planning on behalf of individual students who have serious allergies such as a peanut allergy.	1 2 3 4 5	
43. Director is aware of any special needs and makes sure that staff are able to handle them appropriately or that accommodations are made.	1 2 3 4 5	
44. First aid kits are available and well-stocked.	1 2 3 4 5	
45. Telephones or walkie-talkies are available for communication between staff, parents, and others	1 2 3 4 5	
46. Director and staff have well organized paperwork. Coordinators have appropriate paperwork with them at all times, including: who is present, what programs they are attending, how they are going home, signed permission slips from parents, emergency contact information, and health information.	1 2 3 4 5	
47. The program follows the guidelines and requirements of mandated reporting	1 2 3 4 5	

48. Program staff have reviewed emergency procedures and have practiced afterschool fire drills at least twice yearly.	1 2 3 4 5	
49. Program director and staff have met with school personnel and have written afterschool procedures linked to schools' safety plan, including lock down procedures. Plus: All afterschool AND summer staff, (including part time non- school staff) have received and reviewed written procedures and emergency commands, Plus: All afterschool AND summer staff, (including part time non- school staff) have reviewed regular program space to determine what to do and where to go in the event of a lock down	1 2 3 4 5	
50. For programs running directly afterschool the school day: (1) students are offered a healthy snack each day following proper nutrition guidelines, and (2) students are given the opportunity and time for daily physical activity and/or active play	1 2 3 4 5	
51. Procedures and strategies are in place so that every student feels physically and emotionally safe in the program	1 2 3 4 5	
52. Program activities, materials, and spaces are age- and developmentally appropriate.	1 2 3 4 5	

53. Any issues, problems, and incidents that arise during the afterschool program are communicated to the appropriate school day personnel the next school morning.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	

V. High-Interest Programming and Youth Engagement

Program Expectations	Rating	Examples/Action Steps
54. All programs are dynamic.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
55. All students are engaged.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
56. Instructors are excited to teach in the program.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
57. Opportunities exist for students to build leadership skills in the program.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
58. High expectations are articulated and modeled by and for young people	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
59. Space is designed to support engagement.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
60. Students display ownership and pride in the program.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	

61. Programs include a culminating activity or other format where students can present or display their learning and accomplishments.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	

VI. Flexible Structures and Student Choice

Program Expectations	Rating	Examples/Action Steps
62. Programs are of sufficient length, intensity, and duration to allow students to develop lasting skills relationships, and experiences	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
63. Program uses flexible structures and varied instructional activities to accommodate students with different learning needs and learning paces.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
64. Programs provide students with an exposure to a variety of subjects.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
65. Each participating student is offered a variety of age-appropriate learning and enrichment opportunities.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
66. Opportunities exist for students to pursue their own interests and learning.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
67. Grade levels are split appropriately and students are offered different options and opportunities in line with their level of maturity, development, and interests.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	

VII. School Leadership and Organization Support

Program Expectations	Rating	Examples/Action Steps
68. The school principal is actively involved in in the program and meets regularly with the director.	1 2 3 4 5	
69. Director can rely on the school principal for support in solving problems or handling larger issues that may arise.	1 2 3 4 5	
70. Director has access to or attends the school leadership team meetings.	1 2 3 4 5	
71. The school board or other relevant organizational board is aware of and supports the program.	1 2 3 4 5	
72. The afterschool program receives support and visibility through the school newsletter, annual report, bulletin boards, website, or other appropriate formats.	1 2 3 4 5	
73. The school leaders speak highly of the program and recommend the program to students and families.	1 2 3 4 5	
74. The afterschool program is included in the school action plan and/or school improvement plans as a viable option providing additional student supports.	1 2 3 4 5	

75. Members of the school leadership team play an active role on the advisory board, leadership team, or management team for the afterschool program.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
76. The fiscal agent provides proper oversight, organizational support, and fiscal management.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	

VIII. Relationships with Children/Youth and their Families

Program Expectations	Rating	Examples/Action Steps
77. Programs regularly analyze the needs of the students and their families, both served and not served, in the areas of access, cost and transportation barriers.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
78. The program is structured and designed to encourage regular participation among students.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
79. The percentage of students in the after school program qualifying for free/reduced lunch reflects the overall percentage of the school/town/district.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
80. Program participation is equitable and appropriate between boys and girls.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	
81. Parents/ families can easily reach program staff during the program or at other times during the day.	1	
	2	
	3	
	4	
	5	

82. Staff are available and welcoming when parents/ families visit the program or come to pick up their child(ren).	1 2 3 4 5	
83. Special events and activities are offered that include parents and families and these events are well-attended.	1 2 3 4 5	
84. Parents and families are encouraged to speak with the staff, visit the program, participate in activities, or support the program in other ways.	1 2 3 4 5	
85. Sufficient program hours and days are offered to build regular attendance and to have a positive impact upon students.	1 2 3 4 5	

IX. Instructional Leadership

Program Expectations	Rating	Examples/Action Steps
86. The goals and objectives of each program or activity are clearly defined and intentionally designed.	1 2 3 4 5	
87. A number of stakeholders, including students, help inform and design the programs.	1 2 3 4 5	
88. Program staff collect feedback and input from stakeholders to improve and adapt programs.	1 2 3 4 5	
89. Program staff incorporate knowledge of best practices and promising practices in selecting and designing programs.	1 2 3 4 5	

90. Instructors have adequate planning time and prepare and execute engaging and intentionally thought out lesson plans for each class or activity.	1 2 3 4 5	
91. Additional academic supports or tutoring is available for those students who need it.	1 2 3 4 5	

X. Community Partnerships and Program Sustainability

Program Expectations	Rating	Examples/Action Steps
92. The program communicates with stakeholders.	1 2 3 4 5	
93. Successes are communicated to stakeholders.	1 2 3 4 5	
94. Program has the support and involvement of a diverse set of community partners.	1 2 3 4 5	
95. An active sustainability plan and team exists.	1 2 3 4 5	
96. A variety of contributing partners financially support the program including the school.	1 2 3 4 5	
97. Director can create a sustainability pie chart showing how different pieces of the budget can be funded by different sources.	1 2 3 4 5	

Program Director's Checklist for
Program Management and Administration

Program Expectations	Rating	Examples/Action Steps
1. Programs follow the spirit and intention of the 21C legislation	YES NO	
2. Budgets are efficiently organized, updated, and monitored.	YES NO	
3. Director meets regularly with business manager to review accounts and reconcile differences.	YES NO	
4. A standard procedure is established for making purchases and tracking receipts.	YES NO	
5. Contracts and time sheets following federal rules are in place for all employees.	YES NO	
6. Procedures and standards are established for paying instructors/staff in an equitable and appropriate manner.	YES NO	
7. Amendments are requested for changes to a line item or for a project change of scope before they occur.	YES NO	

8. All equipment purchases are inventoried. If used during the school day, the school has contributed to the purchase of the equipment at an appropriate level.	YES	
	NO	
9. Grant funds are never used to supplant.	YES	
	NO	
10. Director knows the total project costs of the program and has based sustainability and funding requests upon this number.	YES	
	NO	
11. An accounting structure has been established to ensure that all income and fees will be spent by the end of the grant period.	YES	
	NO	
12. Data is used for specific purposes and is related to the project's goals and objectives.	YES	
	NO	
13. All staff especially those with student data responsibilities have been trained in FERPA in handling and recording student data.	YES	
	NO	
14. Director checks regularly (at least monthly) that data are being collected, cleaned and stored properly.	YES	
	NO	
15. Regular back-ups are made of all data.	YES	
	NO	
16. Federal Time and effort documentation is completed	YES	
	NO	

Site Based Report Template		
Interview Areas	Evidence and Assessment	
1. What <u>successes</u> exist?		
2. What <u>challenges</u> are being faced?		
3. What do you do as a <u>leader</u> within the project and why?		
4. What are the strengths and challenges in the <u>organizational systems</u> ? (safety, staff, programs, and data)		
5. What is the evidence <u>programs</u> are of high quality?		
Program Visit Expectations	Ratings: 1=low 3=average 5=excellent	Evidence and Assessment
1. All programs are intentional		
2. All students are engaged		
3. Staff are effective		
4. Space and materials are supporting learning		
5. High expectations are being modeled		